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## OUR NIGHT NURSES' SUPPER

By MARY A. LINDSLEY

*Chicago, Illinois*

For some time we had not been satisfied with the manner in which our night nurses' supper was being served. Certainly it gave rise to discontent on the part of our student nurses who were on night service in Cook County Hospital. I happened to overhear two of the students protesting at being posted for night duty.

"It isn't that I mind night duty on the wards," said the first.

"Or that I have to sleep in the daytime," said the second.

"But it's the supper," added the first. "The food is so cold and tasteless that I don't enjoy eating it one bit."

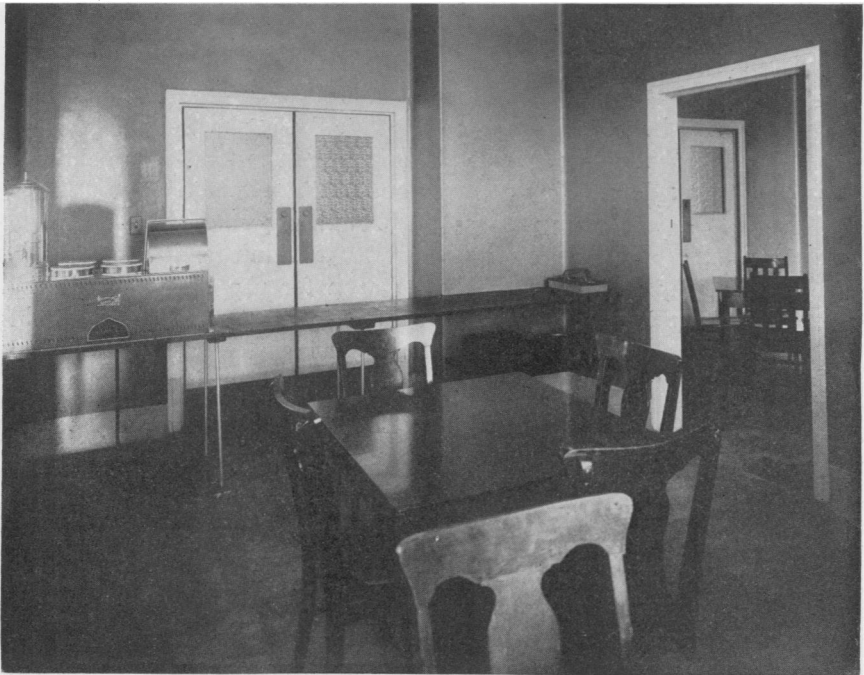
"Well," finished the second, "I should say not. I wouldn't go down to supper at all, if only the supervisor wouldn't report me."

On investigation we found real reason for the complaint of the nurses, for the supper was served in an unattractive room in an old part of the hospital. Though the food was identical with that served in the home at noon, the cooking apparatus was so inadequate that the dinner was unpalatable by the time it reached the table. All persons on duty were seated at the same long table and altogether it was a dismal way for night nurses to get their main meal.

Our Board of Managers considered making some change which would better the situation and finally concluded that the midnight meal could be handled better and more economically if it were brought more directly under the home management. The first step was to secure better accommodations, as we felt that the trouble was largely due to the inadequate equipment in the old dining place. Accordingly the president of the Board and the head of the Nurses' Home went, with some trepidation to be sure, to plead with the Warden of the hospital for better quarters. They found him, however, entirely sympathetic and eager for the nurses to have the best possible accommodations. He agreed with them that everything should be done to make the night service as tolerable as possible and kindly arranged for us to have the use of three rooms, opening into each other, on the ground floor of the new hospital building. One room contained a marble sink, a modern improved coil refrigerator and a ventilated food cupboard. After installing a steel range and two tables, with the necessary kitchen utensils, we had a complete, clean and sanitary

kitchen and there was no excuse now for the inadequate preparation of the food.

When it came to serving the supper, we estimated that a cafeteria service would be economical, as it would do away with the necessity of employing waitresses, as well as give us a chance to utilize small quantities of food left from the service in the home. By serving these small quantities as alternatives to the regular bill of fare, perhaps a bit of cold meat, perhaps a few helpings of a dessert, we could offer a



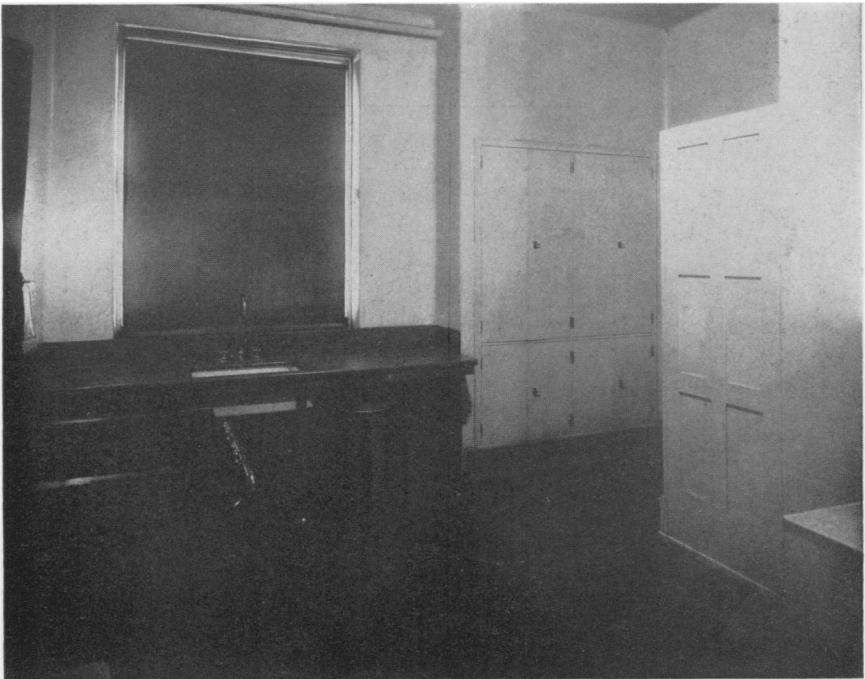
NIGHT NURSES' CAFETERIA

greater variety to the nurses, and they would have the joy of selecting from several kinds of food that which most appealed to them. That variety is the spice of diet, is no new discovery, but we were glad to be able to apply it so satisfactorily. We all enjoy eating most keenly when we can have the feeling of exercising a little choice in the matter.

The night nurses and attendants altogether numbered sixty, but as they came down to supper in relays of about twenty at a time, it was possible to accommodate them at six small tables, each seating four people, placed in the two rooms in true café style. In order to keep

the food as piping hot for the last relay as it was for the first, we placed a small steam table with receptacles large enough for the required amount of food. A long counter-shelf, extending the length of the central room, and arrayed with plates of bread and appetizing dishes of food, made it seem like a genuine cafeteria, with this advantage, that there was no price list of foods hanging on the wall back of the counter.

It was gratifying to note how enthusiastically this change was



ANOTHER VIEW OF CAFETERIA

received by the nurses on night duty. They declare the food to be so tasty that they eat it with real zest, which means of course that they are getting the food values that their hard-working bodies require. The cafeteria service, with its variety of food, and the separate tables where friendly groups might gather and make their meal a sociable as well as a nutritious one, brought a novelty to relieve the monotony of the night duty. Then, too, the new dining room was so clean, so orderly, and so quiet and remote from the wards that it afforded restful surroundings and a much-needed chance for relaxation. It is need-

less to add that the nurses accept night duty with less protest, and finish their period of night work looking more rested and better fed. We have noticed, too, that they are better able to resist colds and infections than they were under the former plan.

Much interest in the "night cafeteria" has been aroused, not only among the other nurses, who eagerly await their turn to go on night duty and join the "lunch line," but among the employees and even the patients in the hospital. Visitors from other hospitals and training schools have also shown a great deal of interest, declaring that it is a plan that might well be adopted by their institution as a satisfactory way to serve the night nurses' supper.

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#### BRAN BISCUITS FOR CONSTIPATION

Bran,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ounces

Agar, 90 grains, or  $\frac{1}{8}$  ounce

Eggs, 2

Salt to taste

Put the agar into a small dish with a cup of water. Boil until dissolved. While this is boiling hot, the bran, which should be warm, is beaten into it to make a rather thick batter. Add the eggs, beaten as light as possible, also a little sugar, if desired, and the salt. The mixture is then poured in gem pans and baked. Chocolate or other flavoring may be used.